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U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual Volume 7
Consular Affairs

7 FAM 070

WARDEN SYSTEMS

(CT:CON-533; 09-19-2014)

(Office of Origin: CA/OCS/L)

7 FAM 071 INTRODUCTION

(CT:CON-533; 09-19-2014)

- a. A well organized and efficient warden system is essential for a post to carry out its primary function of U.S. citizen protection in times of crisis. The Consular Section Chief (or equivalent) is responsible for management of the post's warden system, including periodic testing, updating warden contact information, recruitment of wardens to ensure adequate coverage of the consular district, and periodic meetings and/or conferences with wardens.
- b. Wardens assist consular sections in disaster preparedness by alerting U.S. citizens to emergency situations and passing on information from the post or Department. Wardens are also a valuable asset that can provide post with key information, both about specific individuals and for situational awareness, from the local community or area. Because of privacy concerns, they (and their alternates) must sign a Memorandum of Agreement (see 7 FAM Exhibit 070.2) committing them to safeguard names and other identifiers of the U.S. citizens whom they are to notify in cases of emergency. The Consular Section Chief must also provide wardens and alternates with a description of duties. (See 7 FAM Exhibit 070.3.)
- c. Posts often have both a consular warden system for the private U.S. citizen community and an administrative warden system for the official U.S. citizen community. See 12 FAH-1 H-245.10, 12 FAH-1 H-324 *and*, 12 FAH-1 Annex K 3.3 which describe the use of both systems in evacuation planning. For the purposes of this subchapter, we are speaking of the consular warden system.
- d. A warden system provides a reliable way for you to reach U.S. citizens in the event of an emergency, disaster, or threat, and to distribute other information of interest to the private U.S. community (changes in section work hours and procedures, voting information, physicians list, etc.). Posts can issue a Message for U.S. Citizens, Security Message for U.S. Citizens, or Emergency Message for U.S. Citizens depending upon the circumstances (see 7 FAM 058). Hereinafter all three will be referred to as Messages unless there is a distinction to be made. A good warden system supplements these Messages for the local U.S. community and provides a valuable set of eyes and ears in an emergency. We no longer refer to these Messages as Warden Messages. This change was made to reflect the ease of electronic communication and the ability of resident

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communities to hear from us directly, and in many cases instantly.

- e. The classic warden system is composed of a pyramidal contact system designed to reach the U.S. citizen population (see 7 FAM Exhibit 070.1, Typical Phone Tree), including the following groups:

Key non-U.S. Government U.S. citizens/non-citizen nationals grouped by organization (warden chosen by position in U.S. community)

The U.S. resident community grouped by location (warden chosen by geography or neighborhood)

U.S. citizen tourists (warden chosen because of key contacts at popular tourist spots or hotels)

NOTE:

During World War II, air raid wardens guarded the coast and alerted the public to danger. The term "warden" currently refers to someone who has the charge or care of someone or something. The Department uses the term to refer to individuals, usually but not always U.S. citizens resident in the host country, who volunteer to facilitate communication between the U.S. embassy/consulate and the U.S. citizen community.

7 FAM 072 AUTHORITIES

(CT:CON-381; 07-08-2011)

The legal authority for the warden system primarily consisting of private citizens is founded upon a variety of statutes and regulations.

- (1) 22 U.S.C. 4802(b) Overseas Evacuations, requires the Secretary of State to "develop a mechanism whereby United States citizens can voluntarily request to be placed on a list in order to be contacted in the event of an evacuation, or which, in the event of an evacuation, can maintain information on the location of United States citizens in high risk areas submitted by their relatives."
- (2) 31 U.S.C. 1342, the Anti-Deficiency Act, limits the use of voluntary services by the United States except for emergencies involving the safety of human life or the protection of property.
- (3) See also 12 FAH-1 Annex K.

7 FAM 073 POST'S MANAGEMENT ROLE

(CT:CON-400; 02-16-2012)

In managing your warden system, remember that:

The Consular Section Chief must execute a written Memorandum of Agreement from the Warden and Alternate Warden (7 FAM Exhibit 070.2)

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The Consular Section Chief must provide the Warden and Alternate Warden with a Description of Warden Responsibilities (7 FAM Exhibit 070.3)

The Consular Section Chief is responsible for annual testing of the Warden System

The Consular Section Chief must assess the effectiveness of the warden system periodically

The Consular Section Chief must meet with wardens periodically. Many posts are successful in organizing annual warden conferences to renew contacts and update wardens on their responsibilities. Your CA/OCS/ACS country officer can share some best practices.

7 FAM 074 AN EFFECTIVE WARDEN SYSTEM

(CT:CON-400; 02-16-2012)

- a. Warden systems vary a great deal between large and small posts, as well as between large and small U.S. communities. In establishing a warden system tailored to the needs and communication capabilities at your post, you may want to consider the following ideas that other posts have used successfully:

Note:

Post should not rely on the Department or other posts to be able to disseminate information to the U.S. citizen community on the affected post's behalf during a crisis via any mechanism outside of the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

- (1) Many posts make broad use of the Internet and email to communicate with the American community, including wardens. This includes both the use of a ListServe email and use of the post home page. The Department encourages innovation by posts. However, technology-based information dissemination tools should enhance, not replace a well established warden system.
- (2) One post designed a geographic warden network using computerized mapping software. This methodology - dubbed the "geographic approach" - is based on mapping and analyzing the distribution of U.S. citizens by postal code, then aggregating postal code areas to define warden zones that have roughly equal numbers of U.S. citizen households. The techniques developed on this project provided a logical method for defining warden zones within the overall framework of CA's ALMA/ACS system. The experience and the methods used on this project could be applied at other posts that wish to implement a geographic warden network. The post was ably assisted by the Office of the Geographer and Global Issues (INR/GGI), which supplied digital map information
- (3) Other posts abandoned the traditional fax-based cascade-style warden system in favor of an internet-based LISTSERV email system. This change increased one post's ability to communicate with American citizens by a factor of eleven and in a fraction of the time the old system required.

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Note:

The Department may not be able to distribute information on post's behalf via a local LISTSERV during a crisis.

- (4) In cooperation with the Voice of America one post drew up contingencies for the broadcasting of phoned-in emergency messages on a specific frequency of the AM band. All wardens were informed of this alternative medium for communicating emergency information and have passed this information to the American households in their zones.
 - (5) Some posts designate a specific embassy telephone extension for callers who wish to hear a recording of the latest Message.
- b. In deciding how many wardens to appoint and where best to position them, you should take into account may depend on how many U.S. citizens live in or visit your consular district, where they are located geographically, place of employment, language skills, etc. (See Form DS-5506, Local U.S. Citizen Skills/Resources Survey). Consider too, your communication strategy for reaching U.S. citizens who have limited or no access to information technology.

7 FAM 075 ASSESSING THE *UTILITY* OF YOUR WARDEN SYSTEM

(CT:CON-533; 09-19-2014)

- a. The Consular Section Chief must periodically assess of the utility of post's warden systems. Ask yourself:
 - Would I be able to issue a Message if I could not go into the embassy/consulate?
 - Do I have essential information at remote locations outside the office?
 - Is the essential information in the duty book?
 - If the consular officer(s) at post is/are away, who else at post knows how to use/activate the warden system?
 - Are all American Citizen Services (ACS) section staff trained in how to use/activate the warden system?
 - Are other consular staff cross-trained in its use?
 - In a crisis, visa staff may be shifted to assist ACS. They should be trained before a crisis, not during
 - Do enough people have access the tools need?
 - What would I do if I lost Internet service, electricity, or phone service?
 - Has the consular section planned with the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) on a strategy for using the media to disseminate emergency information?

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- In the event of a crisis, or other event that results in post's closure or suspension of operations, can the Department or another designated post disseminate information to the local U.S. community on post's behalf?
- b. Testing Your Warden System: In evaluating your warden system consular officers must take into account various factors, including speed, redundancy, and effectiveness. Speed reflects the measurement of the time required to transmit a message from the embassy to all registered U.S. citizens; redundancy reflects the number of sources by which an American citizen could obtain information included in a Message; and effectiveness reflects the measured percentage of registered U.S. citizens who both received and understood the test message.

7 FAM 076 WARDEN OUTREACH

(CT:CON-400; 02-16-2012)

- a. The Consular Section Chief must engage in periodic outreach to wardens. An annual warden conference is a good way for wardens to get to know one another, to learn more about their responsibilities, and to better understand the role of the consular section in protecting U.S. citizens. When planning a warden meeting utilize consular and other embassy staff as speakers. Include wardens in a discussion of how to improve U.S. citizen registration in your district and how to prepare for emergency situations.
- b. You should:
 - Detail your plans for disseminating information
 - Solicit feedback and ideas from your wardens
 - Deal head-on with concerns about over-burdening your wardens
 - Discuss how an evacuation might work so that everyone will have a better idea how to prepare and what to do
 - Provide handouts showing the elementary steps of pre-crisis preparedness
 - Discuss privacy concerns
- c. After the Warden Conference, draft a letter of thanks to each warden from the ambassador.
- d. Some posts supplement their warden meetings with an electronic newsletter to keep wardens up to date on issues affecting travel, consular procedures, and routine updates to the consular information program.
- e. See 7 FAM 058 for guidance regarding preparation of Messages for the local U.S. community..

7 FAM 077 YOUR WARDEN SYSTEM DURING A CRISIS

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(CT:CON-400; 02-16-2012)

- a. Consular Section Chiefs must ensure that post's warden system is effective in a crisis by keeping warden system resources up to date. See also 7 FAM 1800, Consular Crisis Management.
- b. If your post decides it must temporarily suspend services to the public, or if you become aware of a threat to the safety of U.S. citizens, you should notify the Department and seek clearance on a Message. CA/OCS must also consider the possibility of issuing a Travel Warning. We do not always issue a Travel Warning when a post closes temporarily; however, the Department will issue a Travel Warning when it approves a request for Authorized or Ordered Departure status (12 FAH-1 Annex K Addendum 1.3). Always keep in mind the "no double standard" policy—that generally, if security threat information is shared by the Department with the official U.S. community, it must also be made available to the non-official U.S. community if the underlying threat applies to both official and non-official U.S. citizens. See 7 FAM 052 for a more detailed explanation of the "no double standard policy."

7 FAM 078 MAINTAINING TIES WITH WARDENS

(CT:CON-400; 02-16-2012)

The Consular Section Chief must engage the U.S. expatriate community at post. This can be done through participation in American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) events, Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) meetings, and town halls. Look at ways to connect with the community and to provide information.

Call a town hall meeting for the private U.S. community and ask for feedback on how your system works from their point of view. Some posts have used town halls as a means to introduce post's Principal Officer and heads of sections and have each, including consular, explain the role they play in representing U.S. citizen interests abroad.

Invite wardens to your town halls and be sure to publicly thank them. Include wardens in embassy/consulate functions as appropriate throughout the year. Volunteers appreciate the recognition.

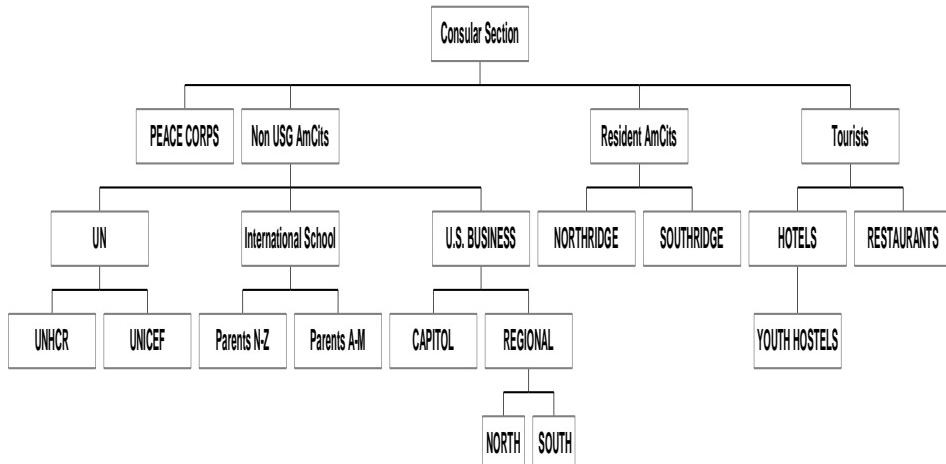
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7 FAM Exhibit 070.1
Typical Phone Tree

(CT:CON-381; 07-08-2011)



7 FAM Exhibit 070.2
WARDEN MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

(CT:CON-106; 06-06-2005)

U.S. EMBASSY/CONSULATE
CITY, COUNTRY
MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

I, (Name of Consular Section Chief), wish to express the appreciation of the U.S. Government and your fellow citizens for your acceptance of your appointment as a warden.

I, (Name of Warden), hereby acknowledge that I understand and agree to the terms set forth below pertaining to information provided to me by the U.S. Embassy in my capacity as a warden insofar as some of the information is subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended.

In particular, I understand:

- a) That the information provided to me under the terms of this memorandum is to be accorded the full protection of the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended. Access to information must be limited to wardens and authorized alternates.
- b) That storage and control of the information provided to me must be adequate to prevent access by unauthorized persons.

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- c) That no dissemination of, or access to, the information provided to me by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate shall be permitted except in accordance with my duties as a warden. Further, the information provided to me shall be returned to the Embassy/Consulate upon completion of my tenure as a warden.

I further acknowledge and understand that my services as a warden are offered by me and accepted by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate in (City, Country) as gratuitous.

(Signature)

Name

Warden

Date

(Signature)

Name

Consular Officer

Date

7 FAM EXHIBIT 070.3
DESCRIPTION OF WARDEN DUTIES

(CT:CON-400; 02-16-2012)

U.S. Embassy/Consulate City, Country, Date

DESCRIPTION OF WARDEN RESPONSIBILITIES

Recommend an alternate warden from the list of U.S. citizens in your warden zone. The alternate warden will also sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the Consular Officer after being approved by the Consular Section Chief.

With the alternate warden, agree how you will operate the warden notification system within your warden zone. Notify each other if one of you will be absent or out of the country. If both of you will be away at the same time, please designate a second alternate and immediately notify the warden coordinator in the Embassy's consular section by email (EMAIL ADDRESS) or by fax (TELEPHONE NUMBER). The alternate warden and second alternate must sign a Memorandum or Agreement with the U.S. embassy/consulate. In your message, please provide the alternate warden's name, address, and contact numbers, and length of time that s/he will cover during your absence. This way, the warden zone will be covered at all times.

Regularly update the list of names, street addresses, phone/fax numbers, and email addresses of U.S. citizens in your warden zone. Report all changes to the Embassy' warden system coordinator at the above email address, fax number, or our postal address (EMBASSY/CONSULATE ADDRESS).

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In the event of a crisis, our foremost concern is your safety. Do not put yourself at personal risk to deliver messages, information or services to us or others. When you are in a safe location, you should contact the Consular Section so that we can confirm your well being and whereabouts. Be aware of your surroundings and report information that can help consular officers assess the situation. This will help the Embassy and the Department of State understand where there are needs to be met and how best to respond.

The Consular Section transmits Messages to U.S. citizens electronically, but there may be instances during crises where local infrastructure fails or inhibits the delivery of timely messages by the Consular Section. If necessary, Messages for the local U.S. community may be relayed from the embassy or consulate to you for dissemination by any means available to you.

Distribute Emergency Messages, Security Messages, or Messages for the local U.S. community as relayed from the embassy or consulate to the members of your warden zone. The embassy/consulate will relay Messages to you via email, fax, or telephone. Arrange the fastest mode of dissemination of information possible in your warden zone (this might include forwarding the Warden email to a group-email list, a cascade telephone system, faxing, or "buddy" system, depending on the distribution of citizens within your zone).

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY

Remain at home or office for emails, telephone calls, or faxes. If possible, the embassy will email information directly to your email address. You can then distribute this message by the means you have previously set up. In addition, identical information will promptly appear on the embassy's or consulate's Web page at (WEB ADDRESS). Wardens who do not have Internet access can call (PHONE NUMBER) and press (INSERT OPTION NUMBER) as soon as they hear the embassy/consulate recording. You will hear our pre-recorded warden message by pressing (OPTION NUMBER.)

Distribute Messages from the embassy or consulate regarding the status of the emergency and suggested actions to be taken. Messages must be transmitted verbatim without interpreting, paraphrasing, or expanding the message.

Coordinate with embassy/consulate personnel in choosing assembly areas and movement routes, should it be necessary to move people to a central location to facilitate communication, documentation, and/or evacuation.

Report back to the embassy or consulate the results of efforts to contact the members of your warden zone, information as provided by the local U.S. community, and any situational information about your zone via (EMAIL ADDRESS) or by fax (FAX NUMBER). Wardens who do not have Internet access

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may call (PHONE NUMBER) press (INSERT OPTION NUMBER) as soon as they hear the Embassy/Consulate recording, and then press (INSERT OPTION NUMBER) to leave a recorded message.